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SOURCE Ch'ang Chiang Jih-pao.

COUNCIL ISSUES ORDERS ON AGRICULTURAL,
FAMINE, AND SECURITY MATTERS

The failure of many landlords to reduce rents last season, or to refund the excess rents collected, and the famine conditions in the area are permitting antiprogressive elements and special agents of the KMT to take advantage of the difficult conditions. They are stirring up opposition to the people's government authorities and even fomenting armed rebellion. In view of this situation, the Central and South China Military and Political Council has issued a set of regulations for ameliorating and correcting the situation.

1. The military and the people should take immediate measures to exterminate bandits and to counteract all the hidden plans of the evil landlords and wealthy farmers to disrupt society. All such elements should be dealt with sternly. Those who display zeal and energy to this end shall be rewarded.

2. To tide over the spring shortage, and to relieve the need of the people for food and seed grain, all local governments and people's organizations should take advantage of the slack period in agricultural operations to promote the rent- and interest-reduction program, as promulgated by the commission, and to discover and rectify any failures on this score. The agricultural associations should insist upon the refund of any rentals collected in excess of the proper amounts. In areas where the land-reform program has been begun, it should be pushed to a speedy conclusion.

3. There should be strict prohibition of the slaughter of work cattle or destruction of farm equipment or buildings by landlords or wealthy farmers. All violators should be dealt with by law.

4. Landlords may not, at will, withdraw land from rental to let it lie fallow. Land which they are unable to till shall be released to others and whoever tills it shall receive the crop. To encourage tillage of virgin and fallow lands, those who till them shall have them free of rent and grain tax; 5 years for the virgin land and 3 for fallow land.

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5. To preserve the fruits of labor for those who produce them, when changes of title occur in the carrying out of the land reform after crops have been planted, tillers shall be permitted to harvest their crops for the current season as if no change of title had occurred. When land is being redistributed, the principle should be followed of distributing parcels to those actually tilling them at the time, taking from the holdings of those who have too much to provide for those who have too little.

6. The freedom of borrowing and lending shall be preserved with the interest rate to be decided by mutual agreement of borrower and lender. Hiring of agricultural labor shall not be interfered with and wages shall be set by agreement of employer and employee.

7. If, after the collection of the autumn public grain, inequalities are discovered with some folk overburdened and others having provided less than they should or if some landlords have failed to report some lands etc., investigations should be conducted and the local people be given opportunity to testify. Those who have contributed too much should receive refunds and those who have contributed too little should make up the deficit.

8. In famine areas, attention should be given to increasing production for self-help as well as for mutual assistance. Farmers should be encouraged to plant early in the season and to plant early maturing crops of leafy vegetables and pumpkins. Sweet potatoes should be carefully protected. Supplementary occupations should be promoted, such as water-conservation projects, mining, road building, public grain transport, etc., in which labor can be exchanged for relief.

In areas of extreme famine, the authorities should establish granaries and issue relief food in a reasonable manner to enable the people to work and produce. In a year of distress such as this, the principle of social austerity should be practiced everywhere and all useless expenditure on ceremonial observances eliminated. During the period from March through August, all government employees and the military should practice the saving of one ounce of grain each day from their rations to be used for famine relief. In the famine areas, the military should unite with the people in devising measures to prevent any deaths by starvation and to see that all arable land is used.

To insure prompt implementation of these provisions, meetings of people's delegates of all classes should be called to discuss them, decide upon practical measures, and vote their activation.

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